

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is requested.

Claims 1-8 remain in the application. Each of the claims remaining in the application has been amended to eliminate the numeric references. Numeric references are not required under US patent law and are given no patentable weight. Accordingly, the amendment to eliminate the numeric references is not a narrowing amendment and is not an amendment entered for purposes of patentability. Independent claims 1 and 5 also have been amended to define the invention more clearly and to distinguish over the applied art. New claim 8 has been added to define additional features of the invention.

The Examiner objected to the title as being insufficiently descriptive.

The original title has been deleted in favor of a new title that is more descriptive of the invention.

The Examiner noted a few numbering errors in the original specification. Paragraphs 0045, 0059 and 0061 have been amended in accordance with the helpful suggestions of the Examiner. Additionally, a replacement sheet for FIG. 13 is presented to address the numbering mistake in paragraph 0062.

The Examiner objected to FIGS. 16-18 and required those figures to be identified as prior art.

Replacement sheets are attached.

Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Douty et al. The Examiner stated that the Douty et al. reference shows a two-part cover

with engaging projections formed inwardly from the wall edge to form temporary holding surfaces.

The subject invention is directed to a cover that is intended to facilitate the initial alignment of the cover halves so that the cover halves can be connected reliably. FIG. 17 of the subject application shows one type of problem that can be encountered in efforts to connect the two halves of a cover.

The Douty et al. reference shows a housing that will be extremely difficult to align and connect. In particular, the technician assembling the Douty et al. housing would have to perfectly align the latching ears 36, 38 with the narrow slots 40, 42. All four locking structures would have to be aligned perfectly and simultaneously to achieve any sort of temporary or permanent retention of the two halves. A misalignment could lead to the types of problems described in the first two pages of the subject application where certain latching ears could ride over the outer wall defining the slot or interiorly of the wall on which the Douty et al. detents 44, 46 are formed. Douty et al. also would have a very difficult, if not impossible, final locking of the housing halves. In this regard, FIG. 3 of Douty et al. clearly shows that the sloped locking surface of each detent begins at a position precisely aligned with the outer wall that forms the slot 40, 42. The outer wall of each slot 40, 42 would prevent an outward deflection of the latching ears 36, 38 prior to engagement of the latching ears 36, 38 with the detents 44, 46. The latching ears 36, 38 then would have to somehow undergo a very localized deformation to permit the latching ears 36, 38 to ride over the detents 40, 46. This would require considerable forces on the housing halves and would generate a very substantial localized deflection at the leading end of the respective latching ears 36, 38.

In contrast to Douty et al., claim 1 has been amended to define “an outwardly open temporary holding surface that supports said locking piece before said locking piece reaches said engaging projection.” This construction permits “outward deflection of said locking piece” at locations aligned with the outwardly open temporary holding surface “so that said locking piece can ride across and lock to said corresponding engaging projection. The Douty et al. reference would have to be redesigned considerably to bring Douty et al. closer to the invention defined by amended claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-4. No such redesign is suggested by Douty et al. Accordingly, it is submitted that the invention defined by amended claim 1 and its dependent claims 2-4 is not taught or suggested by Douty et al.

Claims 5 and 7 were rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Schnell. Claim 6 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being obvious over Schnell in view of Sumida. The Examiner referred to the element 24 of the Schnell as being the equivalent of the claimed wire guide.

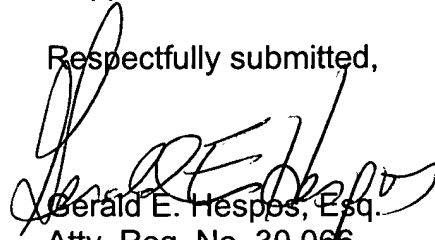
Schnell is directed to a tubular member 12 and a tubular connector 14 that can be telescoped together in an axial direction and from opposite sides of a panel 16 to securely hold the assembly to the panel 16. More particularly, the connector 14 is formed with a plurality of inwardly directed latch tabs 60. The tubular member 12 has an annular groove 32. The telescoped movement of the tubular member 12 into the connector 14 causes the end of the tubular member 12 to deflect the resilient latch tabs 60 outwardly. The latch tabs 60 then snap inwardly to engage the groove 32 to hold the two members 12, 14 securely together. A similar arrangement of latch tabs 66 is formed near the opposed end of the tubular connector 14. A corrugate tube 18 is then

inserted into the opposed end the tubular connector 14 and similarly causes the latch tabs 66 to deflect resiliently outwardly. The latch tabs 66 then snap back to hold a concave annular portion on an outer surface of the corrugate tube 18. The Examiner correctly notes that Sumida shows a cover formed from two longitudinal halves that can be connected around a wire. However, it is submitted that Sumida is not readily combinable with Schnell. More particularly, Schnell requires the simple axial telescoping movement of two tubular members. Schnell would be complicated considerably if one of those tubular members were cut longitudinally. This hypothetical combination would require some form of assembly of the two longitudinal halves followed by the telescoping movement. In any event, the combination would have the wires protected by a structure that is separate from and assembled to the portion of the hypothetical structure that retains the corrugate tube.

In contrast, amended claim 5 defines the cover as comprising a pair of half covers. Each half cover is defined as being a unitary structure and each half cover is defined as having both the lock and an electric wire guide. The lock and the electric wire guide are defined in amended claim 5 with greater particularity and with reference to the corresponding dimensions of the corrugate tube. It is not seen how the hypothetical combination of Schnell and Sumida could possibly lead the skilled artisan from that hypothetical combination to the invention defined by the amended claim 5 and its dependent claims.

In view of the preceding amendments and remarks, it is submitted that the claims remaining in the application are directed to patentable subject matter and allowance is solicited. The Examiner is urged to contact applicant's attorney at the number below to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Respectfully submitted,



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